



2nd Brigade Combat
Team Forward
Camp Liberty, Iraq

The Striker Torch

28th Edition

August 27, 2006



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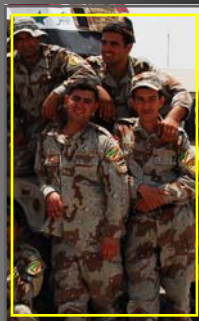
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Left: A Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment Stryker Vehicle begins missions in Ghazaliyah. *Photo courtesy of Company A, 1st Bn., 23rd Inf. Bn.*

Center Left: Sgt. Timothy Wilder from Headquarters and Headquarters Btry., 4th Bn., 27th FA Regt. moves his personal equipment off of a C-17 Globe Master. *Photo by Sgt. Raul Montano*

Center: Col. Robert Scurlock, Commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, shakes hands with Gen. George Casey at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*

Right Center: Spc. Richard Tilley from Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 2nd Brigade Combat Team puts together an OE-254 Antenna at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Spc. Jeremy Neece*

Right: Iraqi Soldiers take a break from operations at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*

Quote of the Week
"The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet not withstanding to go out to meet it."
- Thucydides



COL Robert E. Scurlock Jr.

CSM Jose A. Santos



Iron Families and Soldiers,

There have been many changes in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team since deploying from Germany. Some units that deployed in November as a part of the Brigade are now working with different brigades in Baghdad and Ramadi. Now that the rest of the Brigade has moved into Iraq, we welcome new units into our Family. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome three new Task Forces to the Iron Brigade: 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment "Regulars," 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment (Stryker) "Tomahawks," and 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment "Roughriders." These Task Forces come to us from different units, and will be instrumental in the Brigade's success in its missions here in Iraq.

The 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., and 8th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., come to us

from the 4th Infantry Division. These units from Fort Hood, Texas, have been working around Baghdad for the last several months. The 1st Bn., 23rd Stryker Bn., comes from Fort Lewis, Washington, and has recently arrived in theater here in Iraq with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. We welcome the Soldiers from these units, and look forward to working with them while we work together to accomplish our mission.

We will continue to print stories and photos of 1st Bn., 6th Inf. Regt., 2nd Bn., 6th Inf. Regt., and 1st Bn., 35th Arm. Regt., as we receive them.

Iron sharpens Iron as one Iron Soldier sharpens another

-Strike Hard!



Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment load their bags onto trucks as they prepare to deploy to Iraq in Support of Operation Iraq Freedom in June, 2006, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. *Photo by Sgt. Raul Montano*



Sustaining the Mission

Story by Sgt. Raul Montano

After several months training, remaining elements of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team joined the fight against the insurgency in Iraq. The Brigade was deployed in November 2006 as the Theater Reserve, Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

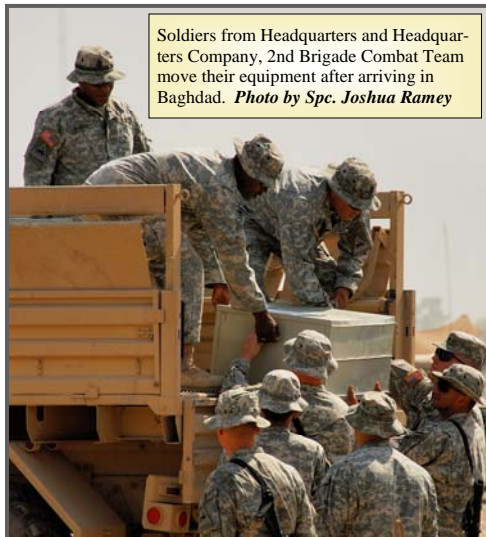
In order to further enhance Iraqi security forces, the remaining elements of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, includ-

ing 47th Forward Support Battalion, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, and 40th Engineer Battalion have now deployed to the region in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

For several months, Soldiers have been training in preparation for the call to go forward.

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Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team move their equipment after arriving in Baghdad. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*



How Far From Home Are We?



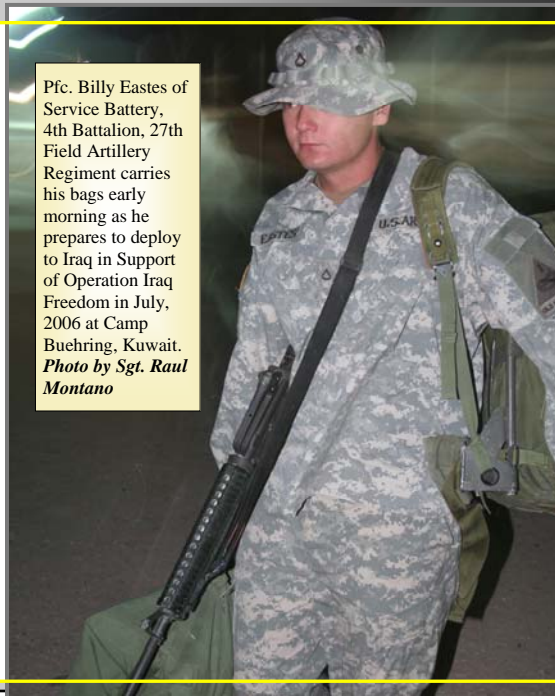
Sustaining the Mission - Continued from Page 3

Soldiers are now adapting to life in their new environment. For many, this will be their second tour with the Iron Brigade. Recalling his 1st tour with 4th Bn., 27th FA Regt., Sgt. Clint Atchley of Service Battery stated, "I'm a little nervous, but this time, I'm working with a lot of guys that already know what they're doing." The experience of all the prior veterans will serve the Brigade well as it looks to complete its mission in Iraq.

However difficult the

mission is, the many months training in Kuwait will prove invaluable to operations that await them. As the call forward unit in Kuwait, the 2nd BCT stayed ready. Now, the Iron Soldiers are highly motivated to join their counterparts already in Iraq and finish the mission ahead.

Pfc. Billy Eastes of Service Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment carries his bags early morning as he prepares to deploy to Iraq in Support of Operation Iraq Freedom in July, 2006 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Photo by Sgt. Raul Montano





Modern Pioneers Take on Detainee Operations

Story by Capt. Mark Bednarczyk



The 47th Forward Support Battalion, along with the rest of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, has arrived in Baghdad ready to support Iraqi Security Forces in the effort to secure Baghdad. Initially, the battalion came ready to do its Combat Service Support and Combat Health Support mission, which it is well known for. Some in the battalion were surprised to receive a new mission, which was reopening and operating the Camp Liberty Division Holding Area Annex.

The Division Holding Area Annex is an area where detainees are brought in for questioning, before either being sent to the prison or released. This new mission for the Modern Pioneers is one that's getting much attention.

"This mission ranks very high on the Brigade Commander's priorities, as well as

the Commanding General of the 4th Infantry Division. It has huge significance due to the sensitive nature of detainee operations," said Major Alex Greenwich, the 47th FSB Support Operations Officer. "This mission doesn't just have tactical importance, it can have strategic importance towards winning the war in Iraq."

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 47th FSB, the Hellfighters, were handed the mission, with Capt. Mark Bednarczyk as the Detachment Commander. He is responsible for anything that happens in the Division Holding Area Annex. Capt. Dave Kretz of Company B was assigned as the operations officer inside the facility. Capt. Kretz and Sgt. First Class Michael Jones are responsible for keeping everything under control in the facility.

To prepare for the mission, the Battalion

took Soldiers from every company to fill the ranks and shifts required for twenty-four hour detainee operations. There were thirty-seven fundamental tasks that every Soldier had to become proficient in to be able to work in the Division Holding Area Annex. The selected Soldiers went through ten days of training with Military Police and Soldiers who have already worked in the Division Holding Area. Through their training, they learned many new skills including ways to combat or suppress rioting, methods of moving detainees, and requirements for collecting evidence.

"The Soldiers took to the training really well, I'm impressed with both their attitudes toward the mission, and how quickly they are picking it all up," said Capt. Bednarczyk.



Above: Soldiers of the 47th Forward Support Battalion practice hand to hand combat during training at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Capt. Mark Bednarczyk*

Left: Soldiers of the 47th Forward Support Battalion practice detainee riot control measures during training at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Capt. Mark Bednarczyk*

Right: Pfc. Carl Dickens of Company A, 47th Forward Support Battalion, practices detainee search techniques on Staff Sgt. Don Grover, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, during training at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Capt. Mark Bednarczyk*



Spec. Christopher Troutman of Troop A, 8th Squadron, 10th U.S. Cavalry watches the road for security risks as part of an area clean up operation during Operation Together Forward in the Ameriyah neighborhood of Baghdad. *Photo by 1st Lt. Travis Hacker*



Ameriyah Scouts

Story by 1st Lt. Travis Hacker

Troop A, 8th Squadron, 10th U.S. Cavalry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, of Multi-National Division – Baghdad, worked with Iraqi locals to clean up trash and other hazards in the Ameriyah neighborhood during Operation Together Forward. This on-going operation is designed to work closely with Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi public to increase stability, and ensure the safety and security of the Iraqi people. The troop has been in the capital city and continues to work improving the conditions of Baghdad, particularly the neighborhood of Ameriyah.

The Squadron has been working closely with Iraqi Security Forces and the local government of Ameriyah, performing operations designed to help increase security and improve the quality of life for the people of Iraq. Troop A, 8th Sqn., 10th U.S. Cav. recently helped to cordon off the neighborhood of Ameriyah, allowing the Iraqi Army, Iraqi police, and National police forces to take the lead in searching for anti-Iraqi forces and

contraband, helping to curb the violence that has been occurring in the area. The 8th Sqn., 10th U.S. Cav. Soldiers are also providing security for local contractors that have accepted contracts to come in an clear debris, rubble, and trash from the streets of Ameriyah, helping to lay the groundwork for civil works projects to begin again. The atmosphere in the area is slowly changing; shops are now beginning to reopen and people are once again walking the main streets with less fear of being victimized by violence.

The Troop continues working closely with the Iraqi Security Forces and building trusting relationships with the local people. Through operations to improve and secure the area, the ISF and MND-B hopes to bring stability and normalcy back to Baghdad.



1st Lt. Aaron Reid of Troop A, 8th Squadron, 10th U.S. Cavalry contacts Squadron Headquarters with updates on cordon operations during Operation Together Forward in the neighborhood of Ameriyah, Baghdad. *Photo by 1st Lt. Travis Hacker*





Iraqi Army Leading the Way

Story by Sgt. Raul Montano

The 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division in conjunction with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, moved into the Ameriyah neighborhood in southwest Baghdad on August 13, 2006, in the combined effort during Operation Together Forward. The mission was to clear the area of insurgents and weapons, as well as establishing working relationships with the citizens of the city.

Soldiers from 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, entered and cleared the Baghdad houses while U.S. Soldiers took on a support role in a mission to reduce the recent surge of violence.

The operation began early on Sunday morning when 8th Battalion, 10th U.S. Cavalry, conducted a cordon around the neighborhood and stopped the flow of civilian traffic. 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment (Stryker), moved into the neighborhood and worked directly with the Iraqi army to clear the houses, search for weapons, and secure the area to allow for trash and debris removal.

The Iraqi army also conducted a survey to understand citizens concerns and begin planning civil service projects, and continue government services on a community level.

Later in the day, brigade leadership went to Ameriyah and held a neighborhood advisory council meeting. The meeting included local residents who gave input regarding the issues of violence in the area, and also how Coalition Forces could successfully complete the operation and still improve local public relations.

The strengthening partnership between Iraqi civilians, the Iraqi army, and Coalition Forces, is essential to providing security to the people of Iraq.



Top: An Iraqi Soldier from 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division assists an Iraqi citizen with a census form as part of Operation Together Forward on August 13, 2006.

Photo by Sgt. Raul Montano

Bottom: Soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division search a house in southwest Baghdad during a combined effort with Soldiers from Multi-National Division – Baghdad, to rid the city of sectarian violence during Operation Together Forward.

Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey



Top Left: An Iraqi army Soldier (left) and Sgt. Haggett (right) from the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade, inquires about a suspicious object he found during a search of a house in southwest Baghdad on August 13, 2006.

Bottom Left: Lt. Col. Daniel Webster, the Battalion Commander of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade, participates in a patrol in Baghdad, Iraq.

Top Right: Iraqi children from southwest Baghdad play in the streets during Operation Together Forward as members of the 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division take the lead in a cordon and search operation with support from U.S. Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade..

Bottom Right: A Soldier from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade, greets Iraqi citizens while their southwest Baghdad neighborhood is searched for insurgents and contraband during Operation Together Forward.

All photos by Spc. Joshua Ramey



Operation Together Forward



Top Left: A child from southwest Baghdad speaks to an Iraqi army Platoon Sergeant during Operation Together Forward.

Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey

Top Right: 1st Sgt. William Fox of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team helps unload humanitarian assistance supplies that are to be distributed by the Ameriyah Neighborhood Advisory Council.

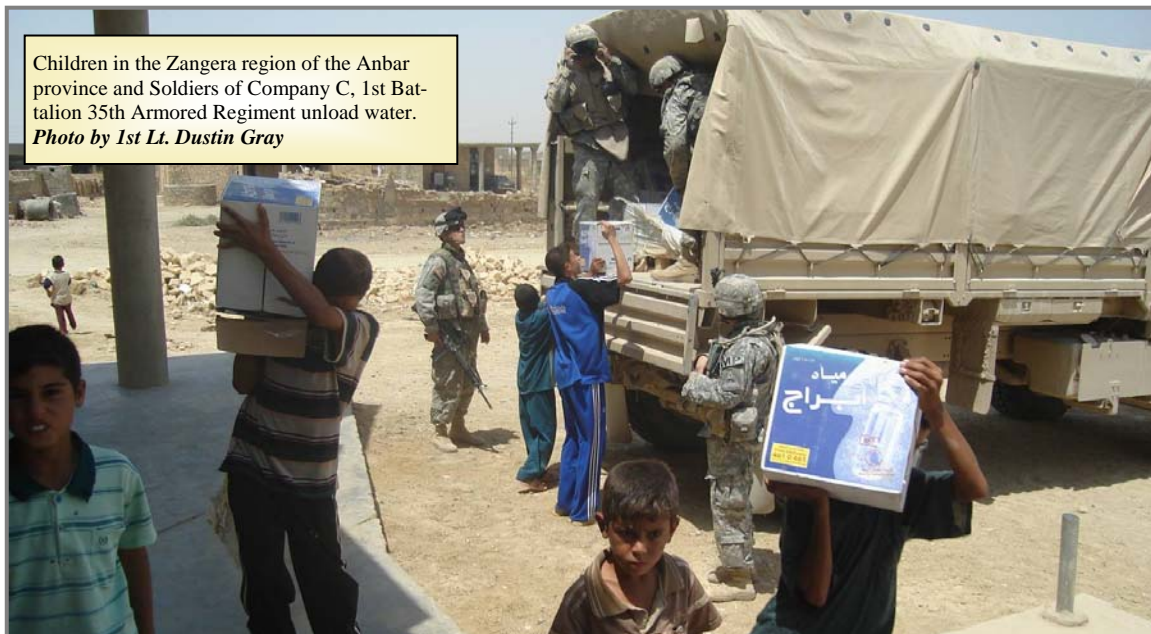
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dockett

Bottom: Iraqi Soldiers provide security as part of a cordon and search during Operation Together Forward.

Photo by Sgt. Raul Montano

Children in the Zangera region of the Anbar province and Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion 35th Armored Regiment unload water.

Photo by 1st Lt. Dustin Gray



Comanches Lend a Hand

Story by 1st Lt. Dustin Gray

The Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion 35th Armor Regiment have been busy since arriving in Ramadi. Every day, Soldiers patrol the Zangora region of the Al Anbar province. The area is sparsely populated with a few small villages, homes, and a vast open desert with long stretches of roads.

A typical day finds the Soldiers conducting security patrols and stopping to check on families inside various neighborhoods. On any given day, the Soldiers are delivering water and medical aid to the small clinics found throughout the area as well as taking a census of what the families and villages need to raise their standard of living. "The main mission of the Company is security of the area, but we also help the local police with training and administration of the police station," stated Sgt. Toric Inkelaar, who

works in the intelligence section for Company C. He also stated, "Our 1st Sgt. has a working relationship with the 1st Sgt. at the Iraqi Police Station. With the two working together, it helps promote a great working relationship and partnership between the US military and local police."

1st Lt. Daniel E. Cross of 3rd Platoon noted that "as long as we stay in place, the insurgents stay away, but as soon as we leave one area for another, that's when they return. For us, it's constant patrolling as a way of keeping them off balance and [dealing with] them on our terms." Pfc. Leonard Thompson of Headquarters Platoon stated "We are always on guard but have to balance that with not trying to intimidate the families. Once they see us as friendly, they really

relax and open up. It's great seeing the kids playing around and laughing."

On one mission, the Company organized humanitarian aid for the citizens of the village of Imam Ways. Because of the summer drought, trouble with water pumps, and displaced persons in the area, water supplies were limited in this village. The Soldiers of Comanche Company loaded a large flatbed truck with pallets of water and convoyed to the village. As the trucks entered the village, the local citizens peered curiously at the convoy. The convoy stopped and Soldiers began unloading water. Once the local people realized what was going on, they enthusiastically began helping the Soldiers unload the water. Sgt. Andrew Stevens remarked, "As we talked with the people living there about the

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water, they started to feel a little more relaxed and started to open up to us and talk about other resources [with which] they needed help. We found out they needed some medical care and help maintaining their generators, and we are working on getting them some help with those issues."

While conducting a routine patrol, the mortar platoon noticed a group of children playing off to the side of the road. The patrol led by Staff Sgt. David Gilmer stopped and spoke with the kids. Staff Sgt. Gilmer stated, "As it turned out they were all really big soccer fans. [The] next day, when we saw them out playing, we stopped and gave each of them a soccer

ball. The kids were really excited. We've drove past their since and they are always out playing soccer. It feels really good to do something like that for the children."

As the Soldiers of Company C continue to work in their area, the Iraqi Army Soldiers and citizens of the Zangora region will continue to work towards improving the conditions in the area.



A family of Iraqis move water to their home after Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion 35th Armored Regiment brought water at their village.

Photo by 1st Lt. Dustin Gray



Mine Detector

Story by 1st Lt. Robert Murray

Sgt. Matthew Garrison, of Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, from Homestead, Florida, spent a month and a half in France when he was sixteen years old during an exchange student program. The host family with whom he was staying in France, asked him one day if he would like to go out and search for old Roman coins in the vineyards. They set out that first day with a metal detector, but came home empty handed. It took him about two weeks to get the hang of it, but eventually, he found his first coin. In the month and a half that he was there, he found a total of 27 Roman coins, some of which were over 2000 years old.

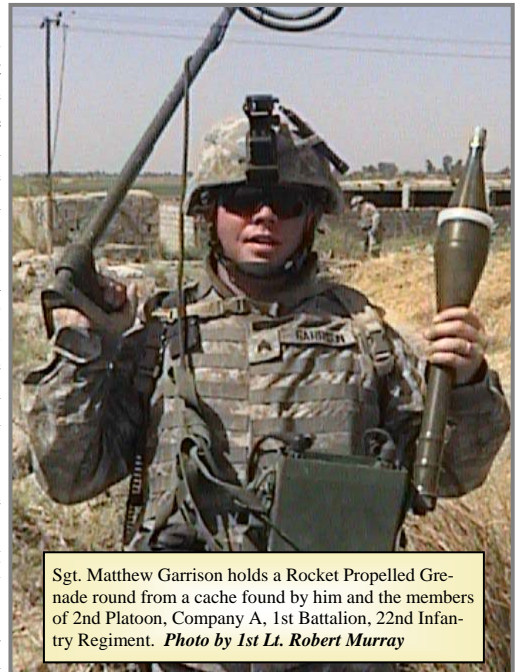
Sgt. Garrison arrived in Iraq for his second tour in December 2005 and when he saw a mine detector, he said that his "eyes glowed." On one of his first missions, he found a cache consisting of 30 rocket propelled grenades, 41-155 millimeter artillery rounds, 70 rockets, 180-81 millimeter mortars and many materials for making improvised explosive devices. Garrison remembered, "it makes me feel good [to know that I am] saving American lives".

Sgt. Garrison's platoon is one of the best when it comes to finding weapons

caches. His platoon leader, 2nd Lt. Bryon Vincent, said "Sergeant Garrison's skill with the mine detector is one of the reasons the platoon has great success when searching for caches." They have found over 14 cache sites which have consisted of over 150 separate caches.

Sgt. Garrison graduated from South Dade High School in 1999 and went to Miami Dade Community College for two years before he joining the Army in March 2003. Sgt. Garrison is a crewman on a M1A2 Abrams tank.

Sgt. Garrison turned 25 years old on August 15, and the gift that he was supposed to receive from his platoon was having a day off. Unfortunately, shortly before a mission that day, his platoon leader said that he would have to go out. Sgt. Garrison went out with his platoon because they needed him, and the mission that day consisted of looking for caches. It turned out that his birthday present was the second largest cache that his platoon has found to date. Later that day, while talk-



Sgt. Matthew Garrison holds a Rocket Propelled Grenade round from a cache found by him and the members of 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment. *Photo by 1st Lt. Robert Murray*

ing to his wife, she noted "it must be sad to spend your birthday in Iraq." Sgt. Garrison replied, "How many people can say they helped save American lives on their birthday?"

10 Rules of OPSEC

DON'T:

1. Discuss future destinations
2. Discuss future operations or missions
3. Discuss dates and times conducting exercises!
4. Discuss readiness issues or numbers
5. Discuss specific training equipment!
6. Discuss people's names and billets in conjunction with operations!
7. Speculate about future operations!
8. Spread rumors about operations!
9. Assume the enemy is not trying to collect information on you so he can kill you, he is!

DO:

10. Be smart, and always think *OPSEC* when using email, or phone, or any other medium of Intelligence transfer!



Teacher, Mentor, Partner

Story by Capt. Thomas Hasara

It is common knowledge in the military that it is a 'small Army,' and individuals expect to be reunited with former acquaintances from time to time. For Master Sergeant Jim Cabrera Sr. of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery, coming back to Baghdad reminded him that even for Iraqis it is a 'small Army.' Master Sgt. Cabrera was deployed to Baghdad in March of 2004 with the 1st Cavalry Division in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. While there, he was given the unique assignment of training the Iraqi Army, then in its infancy. "I was the Deputy Commandant of their NCO and officer training camp for a few months in Baghdad. Later we moved the academy to Butler Range Complex and

again to Taji, Iraq," said Master Sgt. Cabrera. The training academies at Butler Range and Taji were designed towards turning the facilities and process of Basic Training over to the new Iraqi Army. "I probably oversaw the training of 1,500 Iraqi Soldiers in the seven months I was Deputy Commandant."

Master Sgt. Cabrera is now back in Baghdad at FOB Justice as a Battalion Operations Sergeant. Forward Operating Base Justice is an Iraqi Army FOB with a small contingent of Coalition Forces that serve as advisors and liaisons for Iraqi Security Forces. Since coming to FOB Justice in August, Master Sgt. Cabrera has been re-united with no fewer than ten of his former students, many of whom are in key

leadership positions today. One of his earliest students from the NCO academy is now the Brigade Command Sergeant Major for 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, one of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's partnership brigades and is in charge of FOB Justice. Command Sgt. Maj. Hassan was recruited by Capt. Andrew Beal, who works with Master Sgt. Cabrera in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment.

Command Sgt. Maj. Hassan and Master Sgt. Cabrera were equally surprised and pleased to see each other. "I immediately remembered [Master Sgt.] Cabrera from the training I received when I joined the new Army. He taught me many valuable lessons about being an NCO," said

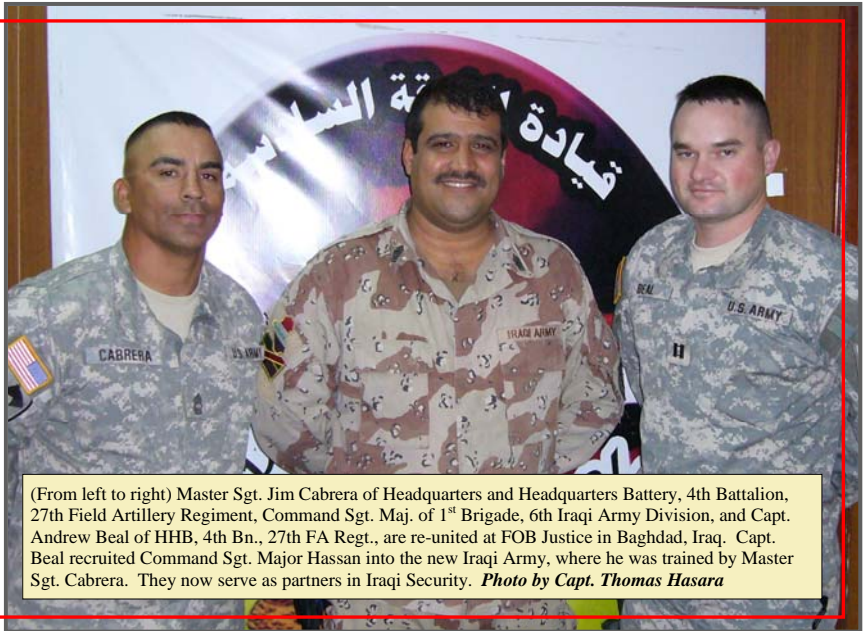
Teacher, Mentor, Partner - Continued on Page 13



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Command Sgt. Maj. Hassan.

For Master Sgt. Cabrera, the transition from trainer to partner has been very rewarding. "It feels good to run into the people I trained at the academy. When I see that they are officers and NCOs in key leadership positions, I know they learned a lot there and were successful." Master Sgt. Cabrera acknowledges he still has an important role to serve as partner and advisor now. "Being a professional NCO is not an easy thing for anybody, and Iraq has never really had an NCO Corps like we do. It will take time and patience, but I think we have set the right conditions for it to happen." Master Sgt. Cabrera sees the whole experience as an example of the greater strategy of transitioning responsibility for security to the Iraqi Army. "It really is like a passing of the torch, and you feel good knowing you helped carry that torch for a while."

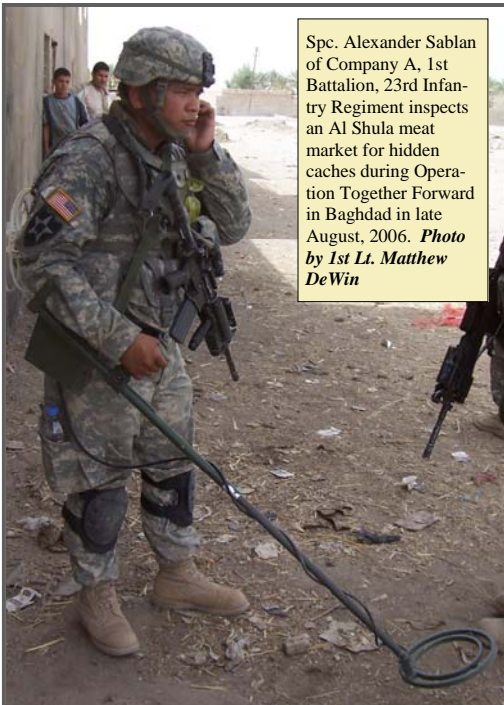


(From left to right) Master Sgt. Jim Cabrera of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, Command Sgt. Maj. of 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, and Capt. Andrew Beal of HHB, 4th Bn., 27th FA Regt., are re-united at FOB Justice in Baghdad, Iraq. Capt. Beal recruited Command Sgt. Major Hassan into the new Iraqi Army, where he was trained by Master Sgt. Cabrera. They now serve as partners in Iraqi Security. **Photo by Capt. Thomas Hasara**



Fruits of Our Labor

Story by 1st Lt. Matthew DeWitt



Spc. Alexander Sablan of Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment inspects an Al Shula meat market for hidden caches during Operation Together Forward in Baghdad in late August, 2006. **Photo by 1st Lt. Matthew DeWitt**

Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, the "Tomahawks," have spent their first weeks in Iraq acclimating to a different kind of climate - a cultural one. With months of unrest, the Al Shula District in Baghdad has been a hotspot of recent violence.

"We're making every effort to connect with the residents and assure them that Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces are here for their safety," said 1st Platoon Leader, 1st Lt. Zane Galvach. "I think they were a little hesitant of our presence at first; it's the first time they've seen Strykers." His Soldiers, along with the rest of Company A, have been patrolling the streets of Al Shula since they arrived in late July.

When asked about the Coalition presence in his neighborhood, Al Shula resident

Ziaad Tareq said, "I feel safer; it's easier to sleep now."

The soldiers have been conducting house-to-house sweeps to clear the homes of illegal weapons that have been undermining security. At the same time, they've been able to assist the local National Police. "We're learning to work together; after all, the future of Al Shula's security is in their hands," said 1st Lt. Galvach. In addition to removing illegal weapons, Tomahawks have been assessing medical issues, infrastructure needs and developing future Civic Projects.



Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Palma from Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment takes a break from the heat with two Iraqi children during Operation Together Forward in Baghdad. **Photo by 1st Lt. Matthew DeWitt**



Top: Iraqi Soldiers from 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division patrols during Operation Together Forward. *Photo by Sgt. Raul Montano*

Middle Left: Spc. Alex Stringer of Battery C, 4th Bn., 27th FA Regt. helps organize personal equipment from the members of the 2nd BCT who arrived in Iraq on July 28th, 2006. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*

Middle Right: Pfc. Danny Ratz of Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment stands guard outside of a house in the Baghdad neighborhood of Ghazaliyah, while Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces search it for weapons and insurgents during Operation Together Forward. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*

Bottom: Spc. Jonathan Shallow from Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment patrols his sector in Baghdad, Iraq. *Photo by Sgt. Raul Montano*





Engineers Make Transition

Story by Capt. Kris Haley

Determination, training and vigilance, combined with the best counter improvised explosive device equipment that the Army has, is what makes up the Engineer Reconnaissance Platoon (ERP) of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion. Equipped with

Forward is putting that training to use. With the new mission, the platoon regularly participates in what they read in newspapers and saw on the news. As stated by Staff Sgt. Dirk Humphreys, "The sweat and hard work during training in Kuwait has our platoon ready to take on any mission from a security detachment to

tions that ensure each piece of equipment is accounted for and fully functional "This is the real deal. You can't take anything for granted. Once you leave that gate, it's you and the enemy, one on one," said Sgt. Corey Hall, a squad leader in the ERP. Soldiers work to maintain constant awareness, ensuring that the road ahead of

"The sweat and hard work during training in Kuwait, has our platoon ready to take on any mission from a security detachment, to a Counter-IED mission."

fully up-armored Humvees, the ERP continuously departs camp providing a secure means of travel for various missions in Iraq.

Led by platoon leader 1st Lt. Ryan Cleary, and platoon sergeant Staff Sgt. Dirk Humphreys as the platoon sergeant, the ERP has evolved into an effective platoon. ERP spent eight months training in Kuwait for the chance of possible combat missions. Now, Operation Together

a Counter-IED mission."

In August, 2006, the ERP's missions began with clearance and familiarization with the routes around the Baghdad International Airport or BIAP. Now, the ERP leaves Camp Liberty, Iraq, several times a week traveling into the streets of Baghdad ensuring other combat components can move freely and safely.

The first step of any successful mission are the pre-combat checks and inspec-

Staff Sgt. Dirk Humphreys
HHC, 40th Engineer Battalion

them exhibits no hazards. Every Soldier has a part to play. With vigilance and professionalism on the individual level, the entire 2nd Brigade Combat Team will successfully complete this mission working to ensure safety and peace to the streets of Baghdad.



Spc. Brandon Sliwinski of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion mounts his crew served weapon as the convoy prepares for a mission into the Baghdad neighborhood of Ameriyah in support of Operation Together Forward.

Photo by Spc. Jason Coles



Spec. Jeffrey Walters of Company C, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment helps distribute school supplies to Iraqi Children in the Zangora Region of the Al Anbar Province.
Photo by 1st Lt. Dusty Gray

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